JANUARY
FEBRUARY
1973

WRL NEWS

Published by War Resisters League, 339 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10012, U.S. branch of the War Resisters Intl., a pacifist organization with affiliates in 20 countries and individuals in more than 80 countries. Staff—Ralph DiGia, David McReynolds, Jerry Coffin, Lynne Shatzkin, Editor—Jim Peck. Printed by the Grindstone Press, a Movement print shop. No. 174

APOLOGIES ON THE CALENDAR

This year, publication of the annual peace calendar was later than ever before. Most people did not receive their calendars until well after Christmas. If you are one of those people we—the staff—apologize. However, with errors of this magnitude we owe more than an apology—we owe an explanation.

WRL has been publishing the annual peace calendar since 1956. It is our largest single fund raising activity. Over the years the calendar has almost always been late—never as late as this year but nevertheless almost always late. Even organizations such as the League develop inertia. We've never gotten terribly upset about the calendar being late because, well, it's always late. This year we were just later than usual. Everyone shared in getting your calendar to you two to six weeks late and guaranteeing that we would not sell any through bookstores or reorders. This year we overreached the tolerance of our inertia. And we're going to do more than apologize. We're going to do something to correct a miserable situation.

The WRL staff and committee promise that never again will a calendar be late. The theme of the 1974 calendar has been set and an editor selected. A subcommittee has been set up to oversee each step of the calendar production to see that deadlines of June 1 are met. Next year you can send calendars as gifts and know they will arrive well in advance of the winter holidays. Our regret is that we had to so inconvenience our members and friends.

DEMONSTRATOR IN SPAIN FACES 6 TO 12 YEARS

Wolfgang Kroner, a German student who dramatized the plight of COs in Spain by chaining himself to a traffic signal in Barcelona Sept. 27 faces the possibility of a 6 to 12-year prison sentence under Article 132 of the Spanish penal code. So stated his lawyer, Magda Oranich Selagron. But the trial will not even take place until October 1973, more than a year after the arrest and meanwhile, Kroner is being held in jail.

"It is essential that everything possible be done to obtain Wolfgang Kroner's release from prison and to give support to his demands," says the November 14 *WRI Newsletter*. "Letters of protest to the Spanish authorities should be sent to Antonio Maria Oriol y Urquijo, Minister of Justice and to Gregorio Lopez Bravo, Minister of Foreign Affairs—both in Madrid. Letters of support to Kroner can be addressed to Prision Provincial de Hombres, Barcelona 15, Entenze 155, Spain provided they are written in Spanish or German. Otherwise, they should be addressed to his lawyer, Magda Oranich Selagron, Av. Clmo. Franco 325 (7) 2a Barcelona 9, Spain."

A PRELUDE TO THE INAUGURATION...

. . . was this demonstration by some 3,000 persons in New York's Times Square on December 21 protesting Nixon's attempt to bomb North Vietnam into total surrender. It was New York City's biggest turnout in more than a year.

It is hoped that this is an indication of the turnout in Washington January 20 in conjunction with Nixon's inauguration. The demonstration is supported by both coalitions, PCPJ and NPAC.

DEMONSTRATOR IN SPAIN (Con't)

THE "LEAVENWORTH MUTINY"

by Julius Eichel

(the only American CO to be jailed in both world wars)

EDITOR'S NOTE–This story was prompted by the death December 1st of Carl Haessler at the age of 84. "In 1918, Mr. Haessler was drafted for service in World War 1," states his obit in the New York Times. "He refused to put on an Army uniform, contending that the war was being fought to extend imperialism and to enrich capitalism. He was courtmartialed and sentenced to 12 years at hard labor in the military prison of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. A year later, he was transferred to Alcatraz for leading a prison strike at Leavenworth. On his release in 1920, Mr. Haessler joined the Federated Press."

He still headed that labor news service in 1939 when I started work there as a reporter. It was between then and 1942, when I went to jail, that I got to know him. In this story, Julius fills in the details of Haessler's prison experience. The story is timely because the protest action occurred at the very end of the war. When the Indochina war finally ends, there, likewise, still will be a number of COs in prison, though not facing the fantastically long sentences imposed in World War I.

Carl Haessler was the acknowledged leader of what was called the Leavenworth Mutiny. The inmates were considered soldiers subject to military law. After the Armistice of November 11, 1918, discipline in the prison began to crumble. The immediate grievances, like in most prison protests, were the wretched, monotonous diet and the long sentences–5 to 99 years.

The COs in great numbers refused to knuckle-under to the regimentation imposed on all inmates. Many refused all work, and as a punishment they were placed in solitary and chained to the bars during working hours. Working COs and guards took great risks in alerting the public to what was going on inside the prison. Then came the added horror of the deaths of two Hutterites, the Hoffer brothers, who had been transferred from Alcatraz after being held there in dark, dank cells and in chains. Upon arrival in Leavenworth they again were placed in solitary and chained like the other noncooperators. They died of pneumonia within a few days.

The public was stirred, Washington was moved. Solitary for COs was discontinued and the chains removed. The prison population, encouraged by this development, became bolder. Murmurs of mutiny spread and the population was ready for revolt. The COs were suddenly looked up to by the prison population and their advice followed. Whatever should happen, they were advised by the COs to meet oppression nonviolently.

It was customary for prisoners to be lined up for work immediately after breakfast in the mess hall. The mess hall had armed guards on balconies looking down on the inmates and it was from one such platform that the work gangs were called into line. The revolt was triggered when a young CO, Oral James, at the risk of being shot, got up and yelled, "There is no first gang!" The men folded their arms in defiance and refused to budge. The revolt was on. Under the watchful eyes of the public and Washington, concessions were worked out, instead of punishment. The food was improved, sentences were reduced. The commandant was asked to recommend sentence reductions to Washington. One CO working in his office got hold of the reduction slips and cut sentences of many COs over the signature of the officials. Many were released before the officials were wise to what was happening.

Haessler had become a spokesman for the inmates. The officials could no longer control them. Washington decided to separate the COs from the military prisoners. All noncooperators were shipped to Fort Douglas, Utah, and with them a number of assorted COs (including myself), Russian aliens, IWWs, etc. There we were permitted to be on our own with no military direction. Another group was sent to Alcatraz, and among them were the remaining COs and many of the more hardened and recalcitrant military prisoners. There was really no pattern to the transfers, except that the "troublemakers" had to be gotten out. So Fort Douglas, Utah, got only COs, while Alcatraz got an assortment of COs and military prisoners.

With the strike leadership gone, the angry Leavenworth prisoners became involved in an officially instigated riot. At least three of the prisoners were shot dead and the prison again fell under complete military control.

I was told that the COs and military prisoners sent to Alcatraz were so completely cowed into submission by the sheer terror of the prison, that no one dared challenge the administration. One military prisoner, who had the reputation of being a ring leader in Leavenworth, was killed. No one who went to Alcatraz ever took the trouble of writing about that experience. The Leavenworth prisoners had won their strike and the government wanted to make sure that there would not be another.

A.J. AND THE '70's

"For Dr. King and other American dissenters who risked their freedom in the 1960's–A.J. Muste, Cesar Chavez, Father James Groppi, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Daniel Ellsberg, and the thousands of young men who chose to go to jail rather than fight in Southeast Asia–there was no time to say 'but not quite yet,' " wrote Francine du Plessix Gray in her article "Creative Disobedience," which was reprinted in the last *WRL NEWS*. "Will the decade of the 1970's continue to provide us with protestors of equal courage and impatience?"

Of the outstanding protestors named, A.J. is the only one who is NOT still with us as we enter the third year of the decade. In fact, he died three years before the decade started–on February 11, 1967. To those who knew him, he has not been forgotten. But in six years many young people have come into the League who never had the privilege of knowing him. So, we relist his written works which still are available from our office:

Peace Agitator, Nat Hentoff's biography of A.J. (a hardback *recently reduced in price by 50%* because of availability of a stock of remainders) $1.50

Essays of A.J. Muste, edited by Nat Hentoff (paperback) $3.45

Liberation Magazine's A.J. Memorial Issue, recently reduced in price ..... .50¢

WIN Magazine's A.J. Memorial Issue, only a limited number of copies left ... 25¢

ENROLLMENT BLANK

Send to War Resisters League
339 Lafayette Street, N. Y., N.Y. 10012

WAR IS A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY.
I THEREFORE AM DETERMINED NOT TO SUPPORT ANY KIND OF WAR, INTERNATIONAL OR CIVIL, AND TO STRIVE FOR THE REMOVAL OF ALL THE CAUSES OF WAR

signature _____

address _____

city _____

state _____ *zip code*

WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE STATEMENT ON AMNESTY

At a time when the Nixon Administration assures us that "peace is at hand" and that the terms of a settlement are "99% complete," it is time for us to discuss the matter of amnesty. We cannot, however, take up this matter without first saying that so long as a single American soldier is in Vietnam, and so long as a single American bomb is being dropped anywhere in Indochina, our first task is ending our role in that war. Those now in prison or exile took their stand in order to end this war and their actions dictate our priorities. So long as the war continues then resistance to that war is our most immediate obligation.

The membership of the War Resisters League contains a higher proportion of felons than almost any other organization in America. Under these circumstances it is almost unnecessary for us to issue a statement in support of amnesty for war resisters, and yet it is particularly appropriate.

There are three general categories that would be affected by various amnesty proposals now under consideration. The first consists of men who refused military service and were imprisoned or are now under indictment, or those men and women who, finding themselves already in the service and increasingly opposed to the war, deserted, were placed in military prison, or were dishonorably discharged for resistance. The second group involves all those who actively resisted the war through counseling resistance, by raids on draft board files, by destruction of war-related government materials, or by the release of secret government documents. The third group consists of those who left this country for Canada or elsewhere rather than serve in a war they deeply opposed.

Our most immediate concern is with those who have suffered the most for their convictions—the men and women who have been jailed, branded felons, separated from friends and families, and had their careers and schooling interrupted at great cost to themselves.

All three groups who might be affected by an amnesty are guilty of technical violations of the law, but the far more basic violations of law have occurred through the actions of government, military and corporate officials. (Space limitations prevent us from listing these violations.)

Unilaterally and without cause, in violation of our own Constitution and of international accords and agreements, the government of the United States made war upon the whole people of Vietnam, of Laos, and of Cambodia. Under the decisions of the Nuremburg Tribunal these constitute crimes of war and those who conspired to commit these crimes could be tried by an international court of law.

Nor can one limit responsibility to the Executive and Legislative branches of government. The highest officials of the military have known the nature of the war as it was waged, have sought to cover up the nature of the war, and have sought to transfer responsibility from the higher ranks to the lower, so that, for example, Lt. Calley alone was found guilty of the My Lai massacre.

In addition, certain major corporations have designed and manufactured for their own profit weapons the principle use of which is against civilian populations. It is not possible for corporate executives to plead ignorance of the uses to which these devices have been put.

Weighing the "crimes" committed by war resisters against the crimes committed by war-makers it would seem to us that the amnesty question has been stood on its head. Those now imprisoned in this country or living in exile do not need forgiveness. They stand honored before history. What they need is not amnesty but the full and immediate restoration of their civil rights. Where they are in jail, they should be released at once. Where they are beyond our national borders, they should be welcomed back into the ranks of American society.

One of the most persistent arguments against releasing those now in prison or repatriating those outside our borders is that it is not logical to continue drafting some men while invoking no penalty on others who refuse military service. How, it is asked, can the draft be maintained in this situation? The question is reasonable and the answer simple: the draft is an institution alien to American traditions and should be abolished at once.

The deeper question is what attitude to take toward those who plotted this war and carried it out. In our view it is both unlikely that the guilty will ever be placed on trial and doubtful that prison would serve to rehabilitate them. Americans should frankly realize that in our present society the president, the generals, and the leading corporate executives are effectively immune from prosecution, no matter how grave their crimes. What a contradiction in the fact that an addict may be sentenced to life imprisonment for a single murder, while a president guilty of a half-million deaths is re-elected!

The League, having long opposed prison as ineffective in changing behavior, and having argued that it served little purpose other than to inflict society's vengance on those who could not afford a good lawyer, has grave doubts that war crimes trials would solve anything. That men such as Nixon, Laird, Johnson, McNamara, Westmoreland, Humphrey, Rostow, Rusk, Bundy, etc., are guilty of war crimes seems obvious—but it is very doubtful that, even if tried and found guilty, prison would rehabilitate them. Therefore we would not urge legal action against those we have named, even if such power were in our hands.

In making this appeal for amnesty for the war-makers we do not underestimate the suffering of this war. For all the years of their lives the men who plotted this war will be imprisoned by the knowledge that 55,000 Americans died, hundreds of thousands have been wounded, over a million Indochinese have been killed, their wounded are countless, their refugees number in the millions, vast numbers of cities, towns, and hamlets have been destroyed, and huge areas of the land itself subjected to merciless environmental attack. The horror of these realities would drive sensitive people to nightmares from which no amnesty could grant surcease.

Finally, two conclusions. First, if it is wrong for Nixon and Westmoreland to locate the full responsibility of My Lai on Lt. Calley, so it is wrong for us to locate the full responsibility of this war on them. If My Lai was a reflection of the military system, so the war itself is a reflection of the American system as now organized. Which of us is innocent? Who can point to Nixon or Johnson alone? All of us have failed to resist this war as we should have. Only by confronting our own responsibility can we hope to transform the future.

Second, this war has been transparently evil, obviously an act of aggression, and so it has been fairly easy for many Americans to stand against it. But the ravaged lands and displaced peoples of Indochina provide tragic testimony that not only were the Americans the enemy—but violence itself. No war can finally be just, for in the end war implicates everyone on all sides in the commission of crimes against the innocent. We must continue to search for methods of achieving revolution without violence, of resisting evil without killing our neighbors. For today every man and woman is our neighbor.

As we wait and hope for this war to end—and as we continue our resistance to it—we shall continue our work to end all war and all organized violence.

WRL STARTS 50th ANNIVERSARY YEAR WITH NEW OFFICERS

It has become popular in some radical circles to do away with all forms of leadership and structure. It has been the experience of many in WRL that "anti-structuralism" has the effect of centralizing power in the hands of a few informal decision makers and disenfranchising the bulk of an organization's constituency. The League prefers to have decisions made where everyone can see. Our structure is accountable in that any member can pinpoint where any decision is made.

The structure of WRL is based on the membership. The central decision-making body of the League is the National Committee. The NC is elected on a regional basis by the membership. Anyone who signs the membership statement of the League may vote. Each year one third of the NC is elected to a three year term. In addition, every local of WRL elects one member to the NC. The NC meets twice a year to determine budget and basic League policy. That policy is carried out on a day-to-day basis by an Executive Committee made up of greater New York area NC members who meet monthly and by a Steering Committee made up of officers and staff which meets between EC meetings. Officers of the League are elected in even years to two year terms by the NC. Through this structure the functioning of the League is under control of the membership.

While there is a definite structure to the League it is not static. For example, for the first 45 years of WRL there was only an elected Executive Committee making decisions. Five years ago WRL began having annual conferences. The first one, in Denver, called for the creation of a National Committee. Two years later the first NC was elected and a year after that it was decided to give a National Committee seat to each local WRL. At the last NC meeting it was decided to try and tone down the east coast bias of the Executive Committee by mandating that two of three Vice Chairpersons be from regions outside of the Northeast.

Often organizations develop an "old guard" which virtually runs things. It is interesting to note that only one of the newly elected officers of the League has ever held an office before and three of the officers are still in their first term on the National Committee. The composition of the officers goes a long way towards demonstrating the breadth of League membership.

Irma Zigas was elected Chairwoman of the WRL. She was previously Vice Chairwoman. Irma has been a member for a number of years but first became active with WRL when she worked with Dave McReynolds in organizing Stop the Draft Week in 1967. She was elected to the National Committee in 1969. Irma was an early member of Women Strike for Peace. She heads up Nassau County WSP and is National Chairwoman of the WSP Anti-Draft Clearinghouse. In 1971 Irma was invited to Hanoi as part of a U.S. Peace Movement delegation. This photo shows her during a stopover in Guam.

Ed Hedemann, Margie Rece and Jim Forest were elected Vice Chairpeople. Ed and Margie are the regional Vice Chairpeople. Ed is one of the organizers of Austin, Texas WRL. He is a graduate student at the University of Texas and has the distinction of having personally given an anti-war leaflet to Lyndon Johnson. Margie is from Augusta, Georgia. She is active in organizing War Tax Resistance and is a draft and military counselor specializing in work with area GI's. Jim is currently working with Hoa Binh, a U.S. group aiding the Vietnamese Buddhist Peace Delegation. Prior to this he was on the staff of Catholic Peace Fellowship and spent several years in prison for destroying draft records as part of the Milwaukee 14.

Maris Cakars was elected Secretary. Maris is currently an editor of *WIN Magazine*. Prior to this he was on the staff of WRL and before that a staff member of the Committee for Nonviolent Action which merged with WRL in 1967.

Norma Becker was elected Treasurer of the League. Norma has been an active member of WRL since 1960, and has been on the National Committee for several years. She was an organizer of Teachers' Committee Against the War in Vietnam and is currently Chairwoman of the Vietnam Peace Parade Committee, first of the large anti-war coalitions.

Any member can become part of the National Committee of the League and perhaps an officer. One way is to work with your local WRL (a current list is published in each issue of *WIN Magazine*). If there is no local WRL in your area then write the National Office for information on how to organize one.

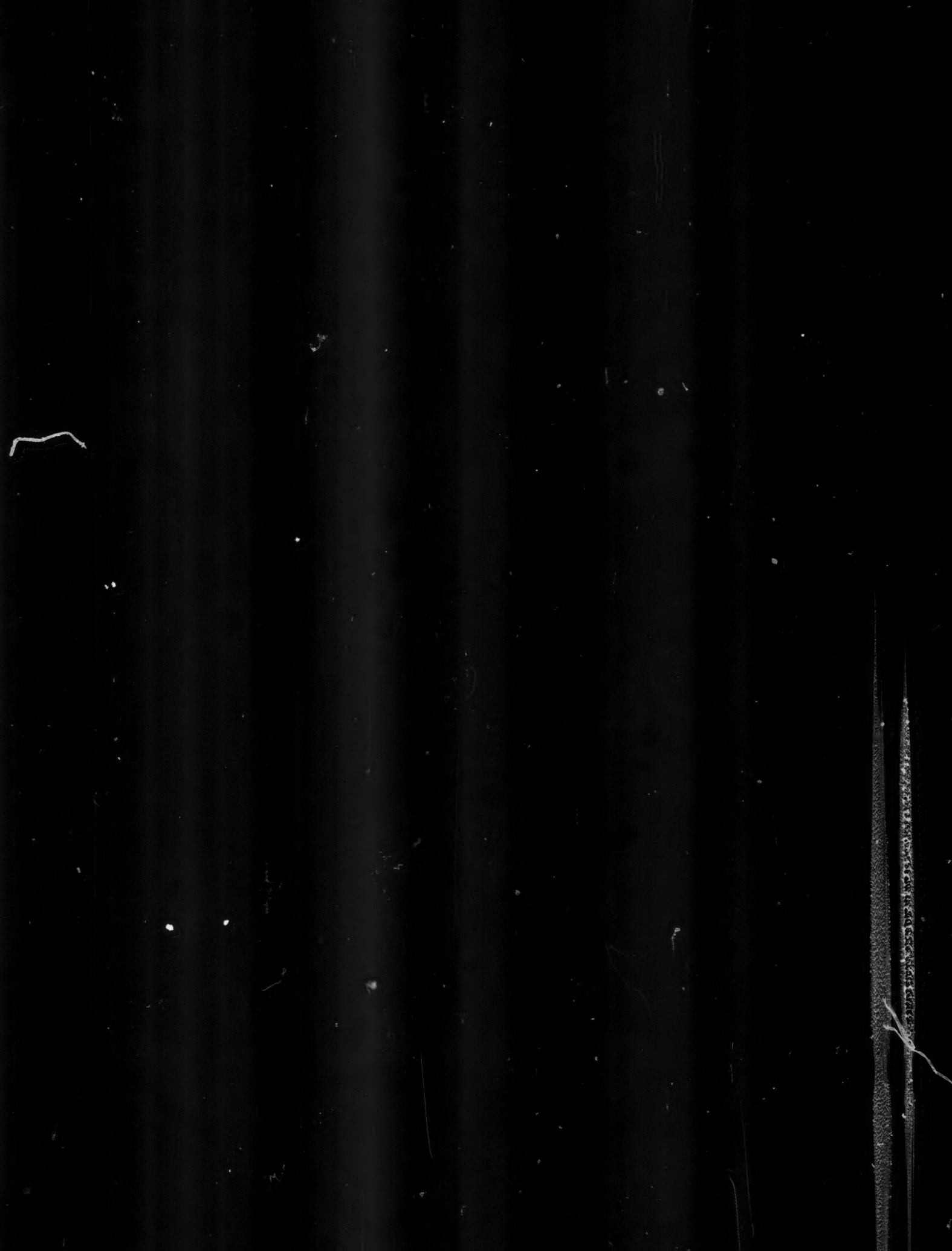
SUBMIT NOMINATIONS BY 2/15

All nominations for the WRL executive and national committees should be submitted in writing to the League office by February 15.

Any WRL member may submit a nomination. However, nominations submitted by less than five members are subject to the approval of the national committee as a prerequisite to being on the ballot. Persons nominated for the executive committee must be able to attend meetings in New York City. There are 16 vacancies out of 48 to be filled–8 executive committee and 8 national committee (2 each from the West, Midwest, South and East).

The terms of the following are expiring: executive committee–Bent Andresen, Norma Becker, Tom Cornell, John Darr, George Lakey, Prafulla Mukerji, Grace Paley, Igal Roodenko; national committee–Barbara Deming, Beverly Woodward, Don Bender, Martin Yanuck, Larry Gara, Mulford Sibley, LaVerne Kohl, Burt Wallrich.

PETER KIGER LEAVES STAFF

After 10 years of fulltime work in the peace movement–first with CNVA and then with WRL–Peter Kiger has resigned from the League's staff to prepare to resume his medical studies. In preparation for applying to medical school, he has enrolled in chemistry courses at Rutgers University in New Brunswick.

During his years in the peace movement, Peter rarely missed a demonstration or a Saturday at the 8-year-old Times Square Peace Vigil. He rolled up an arrest record second only to that of your editor. And he did far more than his share of the inevitable shitwork necessary to keep an office going.